

Serial No. 09/738,611
Response dated November 25, 2003
Reply to Office Action of 08/25/03

Docket No. 5000-4831

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application. New claims 12-14 are added by way of this amendment. Claim 1 has been amended herein. Applicants submit that no new matter has been added. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the above-identified application, in view of the above amendment and following remarks.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication that claims 5 and 7-11 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as being anticipated by Takei, et al. (US Patent No. 5,958,614). Applicant respectfully submits that rejected claims are not anticipated by the Takei patent, in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Amended independent claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, “said air supply mechanism being integrated with said water supply mechanism, both of said air supply mechanism and said water supply mechanism being formed in said housing.” Applicant respectfully submits that the Takei patent does not teach or suggest an integrated air supply mechanism with a water supply mechanism both elements formed in a housing, as recited in amended independent claim 1.

The Office Action alleges, “The air supply chamber and water supply mechanism are considered integrated insofar as being directly connected...” (See, Office Action, page 2, ¶

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4). However, in the Takei patent, a compressor 16 and a gas-liquid separation apparatus 18 are connected by a pipe. Therefore, due to the separation of these elements in Takei's system, it is necessary to implement injection pump 20 to supply water from the gas-liquid separation apparatus to the compressor.

In contrast, amended independent claim 1 recites a water supply mechanism and an air supply integrally formed in a housing. Accordingly, because these elements are integrally formed, water can be supplied more simply by using the weight of water, that is, gravity. This approach advantageously obviates the necessity of the injection pump. Applicants respectfully submit that integrally forming both said air supply mechanism and said water supply mechanism within a housing is patentably distinct from Takei's system of connecting a connected compressor 16 and gas-liquid separation apparatus 18 by a pipe.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that amended independent claim 1 is not anticipated by the Takei, et al. patent. Similarly, for at least these reasons, Applicants submit that claims 2 and 3, as well as new claims 12-14, which are directly or indirectly dependent on amended independent claim 1, are also not anticipated by the Takei patent. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of this ground of rejection.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

1. Claim 4 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takei, et al. as applied to claims 1-3 above, in view of Katoh, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,124,052). Applicants respectfully submit that for at least the reasons discussed above, claim 4 is patentably distinct from the Katoh patent, taken either alone or in combination with Takei. Specifically,

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claim 4 is indirectly dependent on amended independent claim 1. Because Katoh does not remedy the deficiencies discussed above with regard to Takei and amended independent claim 1, dependent claim 4 is also patentably distinct from the cited references. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this ground of rejection.

2. Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takei, et al. as applied to claims 1-3 above, in view of Zimmern, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,850,554). Applicants respectfully submit that for at least the reasons discussed above, claim 6 is patentably distinct from the Zimmern patent, taken either alone or in combination with Takei. Specifically, claim 6 is dependent on amended independent claim 1. Because Zimmern does not remedy the deficiencies discussed above with regard to Takei and amended independent claim 1, dependent claim 6 is also patentably distinct from the cited references. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this ground of rejection.

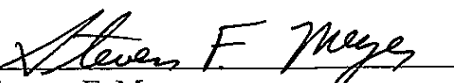
CONCLUSION

It is now believed that all pending claims are in condition for allowance. In view of these remarks, an early and favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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